

## **FY 2019 CAPITAL REQUEST**

Iowa Public Radio (IPR) requests \$1.18 M for two high priority capital projects, at WOI-FM (the flagship station for ISU's radio group) and KSUI-FM (the flagship station for U of I's radio group). WOI and KSUI are two of the IPR network's largest signals. Without timely attention, there is growing danger of significant failure. Iowa Public Radio and the Iowa Board of Regents respectfully request support for these capital needs. Iowa Public Radio manages the stations on behalf of Iowa State University and the University of Iowa, per a Public Service Operating Agreement.

Iowa Public Radio was created in 2004 by the Iowa Board of Regents to manage the public radio groups owned by Iowa State University, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa. On behalf of the universities, IPR manages 25 stations, with tangible assets valued at over \$11 M, serving 260,000 listeners statewide with three programming services: News, Classical, and Studio One. Per our Public Service Operating Agreement with the Board of Regents and the universities, the universities provide the transmission and studio facilities, and IPR manages the stations for the universities. Significant capital maintenance needs are included in the Regents' 5 year capital plans, and fall in the deferred maintenance line. In 2015, the legislature approved \$100,000 to replace the transmitter of KICL-FM, a ISU-owed Des Moines-area Classical signal. The station was highly unreliable, suffering frequent outages. With your support, KICL is now a high functioning Classical music service. Your support was essential for that project. Thank you.

This year, we have two requests for replacing out-of-date transmission facilities: WOI-FM owned by Iowa State University and KSUI-FM, owned by the University of Iowa.

### **WOI-FM Antenna, Transmitter and Transmission Line**

**Request: \$830,000 for replacing WOI-FM antenna, transmission line, transmitter and studio-to-transmitter link**

This project would replace the antenna and transmission system for WOI-FM, owned by, and licensed to, Iowa State University. WOI-FM is the main signal for the Iowa Public Radio network in the Des Moines/Ames area, and is an essential hub for our statewide network. Originating in Ames, the signal serves 60,600 listeners in 15 counties in central Iowa with news, information and cultural programming. WOI-FM is very popular, averaging in the top 10 stations (of around 90) in the Des Moines metro market, and is the number 2 news station (of around 15) in the Des Moines metro area. The station helps Iowa State University meet its outreach mission.

Portions of WOI's main transmitter system are over 20 years old, and the analog-only backup transmitter is 40 years old. The WOI transmission line and antenna are also over 20 years old, and the transmission line 20' segments are connected by obsolete clamps. A failure in any of the segments would likely necessitate replacement of the entire transmission line. The usual life of transmission

systems is 15-20 years, so we are at the outer edge of that life. With replacement of these systems, WOI will move the current transmission system into a back-up role, replacing the 40 year old back-up system. This move will also ensure that both the main transmission system and back-up system are HD (digital) radio-capable. Our HD signals serve HD radio listeners, and also provide an effective system for delivering programming to other stations in the 24-station IPR network. We have developed an audience of listeners to our HD radio service, so redundancy is needed to maintain HD radio coverage.

This project was originally in our capital plan for FY 2017, and then 2018, making this the third year it has been an IPR priority. The need becomes more urgent by the day.

### **KSUI Transmission Line and Studio-to-Transmitter Link**

#### **Request: \$350,000 for replacing KSUI transmission line, studio-to-transmitter link**

This project would replace the transmission line and studio-to-transmitter link for KSUI-FM, licensed to the University of Iowa. KSUI is IPR's largest Classical signal, serving 48,000 listeners in 13 counties in eastern Iowa each week. IPR's Classical service – with 10 stations statewide -- is the only Classical music radio service in the state. In addition to providing listeners with the very best in Classical programming from around the world, IPR Classical also extends the reach of Iowa's most respected cultural institutions, bringing performances from Iowa's symphonies and opera companies to audiences far beyond the symphony hall.

The KSUI transmission line, which connects the transmitter on the ground to the antenna on the tower, has parts that date back to the 1970s, over 40 years old. The inner conductor was replaced in 1995, making those portions over 20 years old. The system failed catastrophically in late 2014, forcing the station to operate initially at reduced power, and then subsequently at zero power until tower crews could make repairs. Although many person hours were spent to repair the failure, the line is old and compromised, subjecting it to potential failure again without warning. KSUI is IPR's primary Classical signal, serving Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and the Quad Cities, making it a high priority project.

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Iowa Public Radio was created in 2004 by the Iowa Board of Regents to manage the public radio groups owned by Iowa State University, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa. IPR's board of directors is appointed by the Board of Regents and includes one representative from each Regent university. We are a successful public-private partnership. 75% of our income comes from private support, and that percentage continues to grow. IPR's combined radio groups serve rural and urban Iowa, touching all of Iowa's 99 counties. The history of public radio in Iowa is long and proud – two of our stations are almost a century old, with licenses that were among the first 100 radio licenses granted by the FCC; IPR's statewide network is seen as a model by other states.

If you have questions, please contact Myrna Johnson at [mjohnson@iowapublicradio.org](mailto:mjohnson@iowapublicradio.org) or 725-1702.